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**A** **MERICAN**

**A** **SSOCIATION OF**

**Z** **OO**

**K** **EEPERS**



# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1969

Vol. 2 No. 10-11

# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOO KEEPERS

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MIMEOGRAPHER AND TYPIST \_ Virginia L. Sweeney

AAZK NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY IN THE FUTURE

## CURRENT REPORTERS

Joe Idind - Milwaukee Zoo  
Ed Roberts, Regional Coordinator, Mass.  
Mrs T.A. MacKendrick, Assiniboine  
G.H. MacKendrick - Assiniboine  
Earl Schulz - Evansville, Indiana  
Marvin L. Jones  
Rolf Hennang - Assiniboine  
Jesse Strange - Philadelphia Zoo  
Ken Kennedy - Vancouver  
Pat Dorr Sammarco - Lincoln Pk Zoo, Chicago  
Pat Sass - Lincoln Pk Zoo, Chicago  
Dick Sweeney - San Diego

BEST WISHES FOR A VERY HAPPY THANKSGIVING AND FOR A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS SEASON.

AAZK NEWSLETTER STAFF - NATIONAL HQ. SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA





## NOTICE

There will be NO December issue of AAZK NEWSLETTER.

In order to allow our NEWSLETTER staff a well deserved breather, and because of the Christmas holidays, we will not be publishing a December issue.

Preparations are being made to bring you a larger bi-monthly publication beginning in January, 1970. By making it a two month edition, it will enable us to plan several regular features of interest to everyone.

We want to thank everyone who contributed items for the past year and we hope you will continue to send us news of your zoo. We especially appreciate the articles of keeper observations, conservation, and the photos.

AAZK NEWSLETTER is your publication and depends on your interest for its contents. If there is a special feature you would like to see incorporated into future editions, please let us know.

POSITION WANTED: Keeper wants work, has following experience: Pachyderm-has worked with Indian Elephants, Rhino, Giraffe, Zebra, etc. for 9 yrs, 8 mos. Married with family. Age 47. Reliable references. Write George Badanich, 222 57th St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15201.

HELP WANTED: Animal keepers and trainees. Experience desirable but will train the right man. Single men preferred. Salary open. Absolutely no bad habits. Year round position. Write Laurence Tetzlaff, President, Jungle Larry's Safari Land, P.O.Box 2505, Naples, Florida 33940.

## INTERNATIONAL ZOO NEWS SUBSCRIPTION

All members who requested the International Zoo News offered exclusively to AAZK at a special discount should send the subscription rate to National Headquarters AAZK no later than Dec. 15, 1969 for the 1970 subscription. Mr. Van Dam, Editor, is including some of the 1969 issues beginning with August.

The yearly subscription rate offered ONLY to AAZK is \$7.50 per year. Mr. Van Dam requested that all orders be placed through AAZK Hq., so please make all subscriptions payable this office. We in turn will submit your subscription to the Editor of International Zoo News. All subscription MUST be received before December 15, 1969.

## NEWS FROM THE BIRD HOUSE OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY ZOO by Joe Iding

After more than 3 weeks of nest preparations, two pairs of our Adelie Penguins produced eggs this year. These four birds (along with 6 other 4 year old Adelies) have been in our collection since Feb. 14, 1965 and were collected at that time as adults in Antarctica at the Cape Crozier colony.

One of these two pairs produced two infertile eggs-the other pair's eggs were both fertile. These good eggs were laid on June 19th and 22nd and hatched on July 23rd and 26th. Through light control, we force them to breed and molt in the northern summertime instead of the Antarctic summer. The chick hatched on the 26th died the night of the 27th after a very short period of exposure out of the nest.

The chick hatched on July 23rd is doing well, is fully feathered, and lost all of its down about the beginning of September. This bird appears very healthy, is very active, and is still being fed by its parents. It has taken a few hand-fed smelt.

Unlike their relatives in Antarctica, our birds exchanged duty on the nest quite often, at least once a day and sometimes twice a day up to two days before the first egg hatched. At that time, the hen was noted to be on the nest and stayed on until the evening of the day the chick hatched, at which time, the cock insisted on his turn.

## NEWS FROM STONE MEMORIAL ZOO, STONEHAM, MASS. reported by Ed Roberts

Black Buck Antelope born-Aug. 3, 1969.

This animal was one of two born that lived. The mother refused to give it any



attention, so it was removed from our lower range area and put in the hospital building where it was put on a diet of  $\frac{1}{2}$  milk (canned evaporated) and  $\frac{1}{2}$  warm water. It was fed every two hours from 7 A.M. to midnight for the 1st week. On the 2nd week, we went to 6 ounces every three hours from 7 A.M. to midnight. The 3rd week and 4th week were the same. On the 5th week, no change in milk feeding, but on the 6th week, omalene was left in the cage along with fresh timothy and the feeding was increased to 7 ounces and every 3 hours from 7 A.M. until 8 P.M. At the end of the 6th week, the animal is in excellent health, is eating her omalene and hay and to keep her company at night, we have put a domestic rabbit in the cage with her. She has access to an outside run and is very active and is growing rapidly. The most important feature of this is that this antelope is absolutely tame. The credit for this must of course go to the zoo staff's two people who took the time and effort to affect this achievement. Congratulations go to AAZK members Leona Cardinale, and Jim Rowley for an excellent job well done.

How about any of the other zoos. Have you had any luck with baby black buck antelopes of this nature? We'd like to hear about it.

\*\*\*\*\*

Male Massai Giraffe arrived Sept 19, 1969 after usual quarantine restriction. This one will be named LENITOU, replacing original LEONARD who died in a fall last winter. He will be two years old on arrival and it must have been a rough ocean trip because he is kind of scarred up, but in excellent health.

\*\*\*\*\*

As of May 1969, the new official name of the zoo will be Walter D. Stone Memorial Zoo in honor of our late director. Walter Stone was killed in Sept 1968, in an automobile accident.

\*\*\*\*\*

Recent additions to the zoo:

1.4 California Sea Lions	4 Mute Swans
0.2 Cackling Geese	1.0 Barnacle Goose
1.0 Massai Giraffe	0.5 Yellow Bill Ducks
0.7 Mallard Ducks	2 Black Buck Antelope
2.2 Asiatic Otters	0.1 Stump tailed Macaque
1.0 African Love Bird	2.2 Bleeding Heart Doves

\*\*\*\*\*

The Massachusetts Legislature killed a bill this year to put the zoo in the hands of a private enterprise. Apparently, they decided it was unconstitutional to turn over a recreation project run by the state to a zoological society.

The zoo help didn't feel bad about this at all. At this time, the N.E. Regional Coordinator wishes to ask help from any one on the pros and cons of a zoological society operating fully, partially, or in conjunction with, a state, municipal or federal government. Write to me, Ed Roberts, N.E. Regional Coordinator, AAZK, 228 Ferry St., Everett, Mass. 02149. All replies held strictly confidential.

ED ROBERTS, N.E. REGIONAL COORDINATOR, APOLOGIZES to the Central Park Chapter, N.Y., which combines the Central Park Zoo, Flushing Meadow Zoo, and the Prospect Park Zoo and which boasts of 60 members in the AAZK for failing to list them as present among the other zoos represented at the N.E. Regional dinner-meeting at the Catskill Game Farm, N.Y. on June 20, 1969. This was entirely an oversight by the coordinator and he hopes that the Central Park Chapter will not hold it against him! Our AAZK is young and mistakes will be made, so we ask your indulgence to take it easy on us and eventually we'll get everything straightened out. Thank you.

NEWS FROM CENTRAL PARK ZOO CHAPTER AAZK submitted by Ed Roberts

The N.E. Regional Coordinator has been notified by the Chapter Secretary, Harry Wurster, of the passing away of member Louis Ciccio, age 50, who was with the New York City Dept. of Parks for 11 years. Lou trained dogs for blind persons at one of the large institutions here in the East before joining the Central Park Zoo. Lou's dream was to establish a dog obedience training program within the Parks Dept. so adults and kids



would be shown how to train their pets. After much planning and hard work, Lou's idea was accepted and in the three years of this program that he operated, Lou helped more than 3000 dog owners. Lou was then appointed Dog Obedience Training Director for the excellent results his efforts produced. In a letter written by Mr. Hayes W. Jones, Commissioner of Recreation, N.Y.C. Dept of Parks, we quote "Louis Ciccia, Menagerie Keeper, Central Park Zoo, has been conducting the dog obedience classes for the department for approximately 3 years and has performed this task competently, faithfully and diligently." Lou was a charter member of the Central Park Zoo Chapter and also was one of the staunchest supporters of the AAZK.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Lou's family and we regret to note the passing of a fine animal handler.

The N.E. Coordinator on behalf of the National Coordinator, Mr. Dick Sweeney, requests that all Northeast members of the AAZK remember Lou Ciccia in their own particular religious devotions.

AAZK RECENTLY SENT A PAIR OF SWINHOE PHEASANTS to the Catskill Game Farm in New York, and Mr. Roland Lindemann reported they are doing fine. This gift from AAZK was made available through Mr. Ken Willingham, AAZK, a game bird breeder. We extend our thanks to Ken for making this fine contribution.

#### OBITUARY

We were sorry to learn of the untimely death of Mr. Edward W. Ruch, 18, a member of AAZK, and a keeper at the Indianapolis Zoological Park.

Mr. Ruch was killed in an automobile accident on August 18. (Lynn F. Williams)

#### ASSINIBOINE PARK ZOO NEWS reported by Mrs T. A. MacKendrick

Monthly happenings-August 1969

HATCHINGS:	13 Chukar Partridges	5 Blue Eared Pheasants
	2 Wood Pigeons	
BIRTHS:	4 Siberian Tigers	0.1 Hartman's Mountain Zebra
	0.1 Alpaca	1 Reeve's Muntjac
	0.1 Manitoba Wapiti	2.3 Maras
ACQUISITIONS	2 Swan Geese	0.1 Pronghorn
	0.1 Siaga	0.1 Goitered Gazelle

#### FOR THE SAKE OF ANIMAL PRESERVATION by G. H. MacKendrick

There are too many people who are willing to judge by comparison, which in my opinion is wrong. To compare Zoos merely to prove one may be better than another or others is harmful and distasteful. How can a person say that one Zoo is better? Better in what way? Construction, location, climate, animal collection, condition of animals quarantine facilities, records or larger staff? These and many others are points of comparison but what sense is there in comparing when standards are low in some Zoos due to insufficient financial backing, qualified staff and a lack of space in which to grow.

In many fields competition promotes better standards. However, in the Zoo field co-operation is the key with which the door to a successfully run Zoo will open. Don't compare, share! Share your ideas with those who are less fortunate in the hope that you can help.

What is needed in Zoos to-day are people that have a willingness to co-operate and join together their thoughts and ideas instead of competing against one another's ego.

In many zoos there is a reluctance to co-operate and share between departments.

A Zookeeper's job (and that includes everyone employed to work in a Zoo) is no more, no less than to care for the well being of the animal and plant life under his attendance. What department he or she is interested in is unimportant. The specialized knowledge which one gathers should be shared with others for the good of all animal collections, not only in the Americas, but throughout the world.



Secrecy in our field is childish and only proves an atmosphere of distrust. This could lead to animal losses. Merely because one person wanted credit for possessing special knowledge an animal in another Zoo may die because of his unwillingness to share.

In our field I say there is no place for people who are sectarian and stuffy.

The Zookeepers of the Assiniboine Park Zoo Chapter of the AAZK(APZC-AAZK) wish to co-operate and share our limited knowledge and in turn would ask you all to share yours.

#### MESKER PARK ZOO REPORT by Earl Schulz

##### BIRTHS AND HATCHINGS: MAMMALS

2 African Lion	1/3/2 Barbados Sheep
3 Black Bear	4 Black Buck Antelope
2 Costa Rican Deer	1 American Elk
2 Fallow Deer	1/0 Giant Rat
1/1/2 Golden Marmoset	1 Grivet
1 River Hippopotamus	1/0 Mandrill Baboon
1/0 Muntjac Deer	3 Palm Squirrel
1 Wanderoo	4 Whitetail Deer

\*\*\*\*\*

##### AVES

13 Cayenne Rail	14 Mallard Ducks	6 Mute Swan
7 Pea Fowl	13 Rhea	2 Zebra Finch

\*\*\*\*\*

##### NEW ARRIVALS

1/0 Brush-tailed Phalanger	1/1 Tree Shrew
1/1 Douroucoulis	1/0 Woolly Monkey
2/2 Cotton-top Marmoset	1/3 Celebes Ape
1/1 Patagonian Cavy	1/0 Grants Zebra
1/1 Hog Deer	1/0 Sika Deer
1/1 Sitatunga Antelope	1/1 Kit Fox
0/1 American Badger	1/1 Yellow-throated Marten
1/1 Genet	1/1 Black Leopard
1/1 California Sea Lion	3 Emu
1/1 Blue Goose	1/0 Black Swan
0/1 Trumpeter Swan	2 Whistling Swan
1/1 Fulvous Tree Duck	2/2 Wild Muscovy Duck
3/3 Canvas-back Duck	2/2 Red-crested Polard
2/2 Redhead Duck	3/3 Ring-necked Duck
2/0 Gree-winged Teal	1/2 Wood Duck
2/2 Tufted Guinea Fowl	1/1 Wild Turkey
0/1 Demoiselle Crane	1/1 Golden-mantled Rosella
1/0 Hoopoe	4 Red-billed Hornbill
2 Lesser Green Broadbill	2 Crimson-breasted Shrike
4 Black-collared Mynah	3 Plumed Jay
4/2 Fairy Bluebird	6 Spotted Gar

\*\*\*\*\*

A new hoofed animal exhibit complex was officially opened in June. This area increased the outdoor exhibit area by thirty per cent. This 10 acre complex provides for 1/3 of a mile of paved visitor walkways and service road; four hoofed animal buildings with provisions for up to 16 individual stalls; 8 exhibit yards and 2 isolation yards. On exhibit at present are the following: 4/1 Emu; 1/1 Onager; 1/1 Guanaco; 1/1 Grants Zebra; 1/2 Nilghai Antelope; 1/1 Sitatunga Antelope; 1/1 Hog Deer.

YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE AAZK NEWSLETTER IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!



SUMMARY OF TALKS AT THE SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON BIOLOGICAL SONAR AND DIVING  
MAMMALS: Marvin L. Jones, AAZK Consultant

Over twenty-five excellent papers covering the field of marine mammals were given at a two day conference held at Stamford Research Institute, Menlo Pk, California on the 17th and 18th of October 1969. Summaries of four of the papers are given here, those I felt would be of interest to the general zoological and aquarium fields.

The most stimulating and thought provoking paper was given by Dr. William F. Perrin of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Fishery-Oceanography Center, LaJolla, California. The talk was about the capture and killing of many thousands of spotted and spinner porpoise each year by the commercial yellowfin tuna fleets operating out of the U.S. About ten years ago the fleets started to hunt the tuna who they found associate very closely with the porpoises, by herding the porpoise into large nylon nets. The fish tend to follow the tuna into the nets and are captured. The porpoise species Stenella graffmani and S. longirostris are captured by the thousands, and many die in the nets from shock and other causes. Dr. Perrin made an actual count in 1968 and found that for 312 tons of tuna taken in the boats he was accompanying, 1697 porpoises were killed. 1359 were of the spotted variety and 338 were spinners. This averages out to 5.44 porpoises killed for every ton of tuna, and when you consider that the total take of yellowfin tuna using this method is over 45,000 tons per year, it is seen that the figure of over 244,000 porpoise killed is not so fanciful. This figure does not include those thrown out of the nets before being hauled on board, and this number is high indeed, or of those that escape the nets but die later. It is estimated that some 20% of a school of porpoise are killed each time they are captured in this method. There is no doubt that such a tremendous loss of population must have some effect on its ability to sustain such loss. The yellowfin tuna industry is a large one, one ton of tuna will bring in about \$300.00. No use is made of the dead porpoise, they are simply thrown over the side of the ship and discarded. As one of the conference delegates noted, this is but one example of the great plundering of the sea now taking place, and unless halted or reduced will see vast changes in oceanic populations. A second talk by Brian Johnson of Oregon State University, Portland, Oregon was interesting in showing how small aquariums (and often Zoological gardens) can contribute to our knowledge of marine mammals in captivity. Mr. Johnson found after some investigation that the small Seaside Aquarium Seaside, Oregon, had kept the Pacific Harbor Seal for many years, and bred the species well. Twenty young had been born from May 12, 1950 until June 16, 1968, and one female now in the collection had been there for 24 years. A full report will be published in the near future but this news is quite astounding, and I doubt if any other zoo or aquarium can match this record. Of those born at Seaside nine reached sexual maturity. Ten of those now in the colony have been there ten years, which is certainly noteworthy. It will be mentioned those animals are kept in salt water, and the pool is drained each evening, when the seals sleep on the floor of the pool. In addition the aquarium now has a female Northern Fur Seal there for two years.

Two presentations were made on the California Sea Otter (Enhydra lutris) by Melvyn Odemar of the University of California and Kenneth Wilson of the California Dept. of Fish and Game. The most important aspect of their talks was the announcement that the California Sea Otter population now numbers over 1000 specimens. This is a healthy increase over past figures. The otters seem to be taking over more and more territory running from Monterey Bay south to More Bay.

Another conference is planned for 1970 at SRI probably in October. It is open to all interested in this field of marine mammals, and I am sure many zoo and aquarium people would find it of interest. I noted people from Steinhart Aquarium, Fresno Zoo, and San Francisco Zoos, and the large commercial Marinelands at this meeting.



AAZK HEADQUARTERS URGES PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE BEING PLANNED FOR TOPEKA, KANSAS IN MAY OF 1970.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR KEEPERS TO PRESENT PAPERS OF ANIMAL OBSERVATIONS, BIRTHS, OR ANY SUBJECT INTERESTING TO OUR PROFESSION.

IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND THE MEETING, SEND US YOUR PAPER ANYWAY. WE WILL HAVE IT READ AT THE MEETING UNDER YOUR BY-LINE.

MANY IMPORTANT ITEMS WILL BE DISCUSSED AT TOPEKA, AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT AS MANY KEEPERS AS POSSIBLE BE IN ATTENDANCE. WE WILL BE VOTING ON ISSUES THAT WILL DETERMINE OUR PROGRESS IN 1970. TRY TO MAKE IT.!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

THE BIRTH OF A VICUNA, vicugna vicugna by ROLF W. HENNING SR, SR. KEEPER Assiniboine

In 1964, the Assiniboine Park Zoo in Winnipeg, recieved its first male Vicuna as a youngster. In October 1966, after two long years of waiting, we finally recieved a three month old female. It took her some time to adjust to our Canadian winter, but after all she grew up to be a very nice looking specimen.

The two animals were kept side by side with a single chain link fence separating them. This was to give them the chance to get used to each other.

On June 25th 1968, the male was allowed to enter the female's enclosure. After a few minutes chase around the bushy island in the center of the enclosure, without any fighting, the male suddenly turned and ran up and down the outer fence line to keep the Zoo Keepers at a distance. No mating had ever been observed by any keeper, but on September 29, hair was noticed in the male's mouth and was reported as a possible date of mating

In the early morning of July 18, 1969, our Supervisor and a keeper were making joking remarks about the Vicuna being pregnant or not. Because of the fact no mating had been observed, most of the keepers, myself included did not want to commit ourselves.

She did gain a little weight, but not enough to appear pregnant. It was sure hidden well under her heavy long hair. When I think back now, the female seemed to have slowed down in her movements for four or five weeks; she would rest more than usual. At about 11:00 A.M. (July 18), the female acted as though she was constipated, but when I came closer I noticed the mouth and nose of a fetus. The male was separated right away and moved to an adjoining field, so the female would not be disturbed by him, or in case we would have to enter her enclosure.

Meanwhile the Veterinarian had been notified and was on his way out. By a normal birth, the front feet should appear before the head, but in this case, the nose protruded first and we anticipated trouble. The female seemed disturbed restless because of the people watching her. As soon as most of the people cleared away, she went right back to work. By now the nose had been pushed out as far as the eye sockets which protrude quite a bit from the head of a baby Vicuna. After several tries the female stopped pushing, and here it was that the baby moved its head for the first time, by turning the nose from side to side. By doing this the nose slid back inside about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches and that's when the front leg slid out as far as the front joint, or the wrist. The baby moved its head again in addition to the side motion it moved its nose up and down. Like a miracle now, both legs popped out of the vaginal opening. At this point the female went back to work and pushed. That brought the head and neck out, up to the shoulders. Here, the female became startled seeing the baby hanging down, she ran in circles, almost like a cat chasing its own tail. This only lasted for a short time, then standing still resting. The baby began to wriggle again and moved more smoothly from the vaginal tract. It hesitated at the rear hip joints just momentarily, but when the female took a few steps the baby fell to the ground with its neck twisted. Almost immediately, the newborn



Vicuna rolled over onto the other side to free its head. The new mother was now standing right over her baby and sniffing it. At that time, the Veterinarian had arrived. He has a one-half hour drive from his hospital, and that is all the time it took for the birth of the Vicuna. The Vet suggested to take the newborn under shelter, since it had been raining all the time this was happening. With a few gunny sacks we picked up the baby and took it under shelter, taking off the skin which was still on the baby's body, a male Vicuna. After approximately two minutes, the baby had found the so-familiar "camel like resting position", and after that it started to try to stand up. After four attempts, it stood for a very short while and then fell over again. By approximately 12:15, the little fellow was standing firm on his feet and already was having his first meal.

Three weeks later, mamma and son are doing fine, even Dad has calmed down somewhat, as he had been running up and down the fence while all this happened. Since this Vicuna birth was the first one in our Assiniboine Park Zoo, most likely the first one in the whole of Canada, and since I had the privilege of being present at this history making occasion, I felt I should write it down for the benefit of all Zookeepers.

#### TRANQUILLIZERS PROVEN TO BE STIMULANTS by Jesse W. Strange, Philadelphia Zoo

The Penrose Research Laboratory at the Philadelphia Zoo has been working with two tranquillizers, Librium and Valium. They are known chemically as chlorodiazepoxide and diazepam. Drs. Kevin Fox and Robert Snyder announced that they had discovered that these drugs made mice more aggressive and did nothing to calm other animals. They stated that their work contradicted animal work done originally on Librium and questioned the reaction on humans.

According to their findings, animals are being stimulated and not tranquillized by Librium and Valium. Original studies indicated they were tranquillizers able to calm ferocious animals. Drs. Snyder and Fox found the opposite reaction. These drugs were given to 200 wild mice in small doses. Wild mice fight to the death to establish dominance and 53% of the mice on the drugs wound up killing each other. On the other hand, the untreated mice showed a death rate of only 39%.

Another Valium type drug, Tranquil, did not give the results expected and was discontinued due to the mice study. According to the Penrose Research Laboratory, the drugs enhance flow of sensory information to the brain. By enhancing the sense of smell and the sense of smell being a trigger for aggression, the animal will fight automatically at the smell of a strange male.

#### AAZK -PLANS IN EDUCATION by Ken Kennedy, Board of Trustees AAZK

In the short life of the AAZK, I think that the amount of interest shown by the keepers to increase their knowledge about their profession is made apparent by the rapid increase in membership as well as the excellent quality of papers which have appeared in the NEWSLETTER and at the first few conferences. Education is a very important part of the animal keeper's profession and a good keeper is continually learning and helping others learn the art of animal keeping.

The quiz which has appeared in the NEWSLETTER sporadically should be a regular occurrence. What are the ten most popular questions asked about the animals you look after? What might seem like an easy question to you could be difficult for someone else to answer. Send your questions and answers to-

Ken Kennedy  
#403-1315 Broughton St.  
Vancouver 5, B.C., Canada

How about a "Problem Spot?" A keeper with a problem could send in the problem along with his or her name and address. It would be published in the NEWSLETTER and keepers who could help out would be able to write directly to the keeper with the



problem. Let's give it a try.

Another project to be started this fall will be to send around a questionnaire to every keeper. Its purpose is to gather information from the keepers about their job and to use this material for a AAZK sponsored correspondence course for zoo keepers.

There should be set up a central place for such things as-

1. A reference library and a list of publications available on the animal keeping profession.
2. A collection of tapes, movie films and slides on various topics of animal keeping as well as films on zoos around the country and their exhibits, etc. These would be available for chapter meetings or conferences and such. They could be done by the keepers and the equipment could be supplied by AAZK.

An area not touched hardly at all is the education program which is usually sponsored by the individual zoo. Perhaps in each issue of the NEWSLETTER there should be a space made available for "EDUCATION PROGRAM IN OUR ZOO". This could cover such topics as classroom talks, docent programs, television programs, etc.

These are only a few suggestions of plans for an education program to be sponsored by AAZK. The success of these plans and any others will depend on the participation by each keeper. If you have any criticism or further suggestions, please contact me.

K. Kennedy, Board of Trustees

#403-1315 Broughton St

Vancouver, B.C., Canada

#### NEWS FROM POTTER PARK ZOO, LANSING, MICH. by Ed Brisbo

HATCHED: 4 Peacocks

We have a young pair of Aoudad coming from Detroit.

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The people of Lansing and around the city have formed a society and call it Friends of the Zoo Society. They have a membership of over 600 people so far with a membership rate of \$1.00 for adults and 50¢ for children under 18. We are glad to see someone take a hand in our Zoo.

\*\*\*\*\*

Can someone help me to solve the problem of the birds in the parrot family picking the feathers off of their necks? Please address any information to Ed Brisbo, 1219 Climax St., Lansing, Mich. 48912.

#### NEWS FROM LINCOLN PARK ZOO, CHICAGO Reported by Pat Dorr Sammarco and Bob Crawford

SOME RECENT BIRTHS:		
1 Llama	1/2 Agouti	1/1 Onager
1/2 Puma	0/1 Muntjac	1 White Bearded Gnu
1/0 Mandrill	1 Senegal Galago	1 African Crested Porcupine
1 Jaguar	1/0 Greater Kudu	1/0 Caracal
European Hedgehog	1 Bennett's Wallaby	1 Owl Monkey
	1 American Bison	
SOME RECENT ACQUISITIONS:		
1/1 Arctic Fox	1/1 Speke's Gazelle	Gorilla(Gorilla g. gorilla)
1 Black Headed Python	1/0 Black Leopard Cub	2/2 Long Wattled Umbrella
6 Flap Necked Chameleons	2 African Black Crakes	Birds
4 Side Striped Chameleons	1 Malay Crested Jay	1/0 Jackson's Chameleons
	1 Boa Constrictor	

\*\*\*\*\*

October 3, Patricia Ellen Dorr and Lawrence Edwin Sammarco were married. Pat works in the Children's Zoo and is secretary of our local AAZK Chapter. Larry is a keeper in the Reptile House and is president of our local AAZK Chapter. We all wish you kids lots of luck. While we're about it, we'd also like to claim an AAZK first?

(Sorry kids but it is not an AAZK first for keeper marrying keeper. However, it is for the boss to marry the secretary of an AAZK chapter.)



LINCOLN PARK CHAPTER NEWS submitted by Pat Dorr Sammarco

The first chartered meeting of the Lincoln Park Chapter of the AAZK was held on September 18, 1969.

As usual, a 5:00 P.M., dinner meeting was held immediately after work which was followed by a business meeting which included voting on honorary gift memberships for the chapter.

Thirty members enjoyed a spaghetti dinner and later participated in the business meeting. Two members from the Brookfield Chapter joined us for the lecture on Anteaters, Sloths and Armadillos which everyone found extremely interesting.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT submitted by Pat Sass

The Lincoln Park Chapter of the AAZK has been lucky in having a big turnout for each meeting and we thought we would share our secret with the other chapters.

Don't let your members go home on meeting night! Usually, once you get home and take off your shoes and get comfortable, it is very hard to get going again. So, we do not let them leave the zoo. Since we have our meeting on zoo grounds, we first have dinner. The first meeting we ordered chicken and for the second meeting, we thought we would try and fix the dinner ourselves. Grilled hamburgers and hot dogs with corn on the cob were the main dish, and fruit salad and potato salad were side dishes. At our last meeting we served a spaghetti dinner.

Also, between our business meeting and guest speaker, we have a small coffee break. Usually, we have two or three cakes which are donated by the girls of the chapter.

So that we do not fall in the red, we charge a donation of \$1.50 per person for dinner. This covers the cost of the dinner plus helps us pay for the mailing of notices that go out a week prior to the meeting date.

DEAR AAZK MEMBER;

A rumor has been started that the AAZK is about to fold up. I should like to make it clear that it is NOTHING BUT A RUMOR.

AAZK is very much alive and will remain so.

I am the first to admit that certain factions within the zoo world would like nothing better than to see this happen, but I hate to disappoint them.

The American Association of Zoo Keepers is here to stay as long as the zoo keepers want it to operate, and it shall operate with or without the blessings of some of our learned colleagues.

I want to repeat that National Headquarters operates independent of any affiliation with any other organization or zoo. AAZK is financed by its membership alone, and its success or failure depends on its membership support only. We don't have to answer to anyone for our decisions.

This rumor got started at the San Diego Zoo, because the local chapter found it necessary financially to revert to an entirely new concept in chapter operation. Local officers were replaced by a chairman and two committee members. The chapter is now designated as the Headquarters Chapter. Members are comprised of some thirty-five keepers from the San Diego Zoo and meetings are held at National Hq.

It was also rumored that some divisions of zoos were being denied membership in AAZK. MEMBERSHIP IS AVAILABLE TO ANY AND ALL ZOO PERSONNEL DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH OUR PURPOSE. THIS INCLUDES ALL LEVELS. WE HAVE APPROPRIATE CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP TO COVER ANYONE WHO WISHES TO SUPPORT THE AAZK. MEMBERSHIP IS VOLUNTARY TO ALL.

AAZK needs cooperation not false accusations or rumor mongers.

Sincerely,  
Richard G. Sweeney  
Chairman, Board of Trustees, AAZK



THE LEAST WEASEL, *Mustela rixosa* by Hertha L. Wenzel

The least weasel is a boreal species first described by Baird in 1857. Its distinguishing characteristics are; small body size of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and a tail much shorter than that of the short-tailed weasels. The tail of the least weasel also lacks the prominent black tip possessed by all other Alberta species. *Mustela rixosa* are distributed in an eight to nine hundred mile band extending from Alaska to Montreal and the Great Lakes, and including most of Alberta. Due to their quickness and small size, they are very rarely seen or caught. Dr. D. Soper, around Edmonton in 1918, caught only one least weasel during a period of time in which he caught 150 weasels of other species. The winter coat of *M. rixosa* is pure white. In 1917, Criddle<sup>2</sup> observed one almost white on October 31st. Seton<sup>3</sup> tells of one native superstition which regards the capture of a least weasel as a sign of great good fortune destining the captor to become a great man.

Least weasels prey on mice, voles, shrew, and insects. Their numbers seem to be greatly affected by rodent fluctuations. Most hunting is done by night, and a certain cat-like playfulness has often been observed in their hunting techniques. Apparently they first attempt to bite the victim anywhere to establish a blood scent if tracking becomes necessary, and to weaken the prey. Actual killing is usually done by penetrating to the brain or by dislodging the vertebrae behind the head.

For a den, they create a small burrow under windfall, logs, roots, rocks, or in stream banks. Stuart Criddle<sup>4</sup>, has observed several cases where least weasels invaded the winter homes of voles, destroying the inhabitants, and making the burrows their own central quarters for several weeks. Least weasels usually have a sleeping place and a store-chamber for surplus food. The habit of killing more than for immediate use has been well-noted among weasels. It is probably a very functional adaptation for such a small and active animal. The bodies of the prey are often buried or taken underground to preserve them somewhat. These stores are seldom used if fresh prey is plentiful. The surplus killing seems to be most pronounced in late summer and fall, perhaps hinting at some design for winter storage. Their very persistent hunting methods and their habit of surplus killing has led Criddle to call the least weasel the most useful of Canadian predators.

Least weasel nests are often lined with the fur and feathers of their prey. Probably only one litter is raised, by the mother alone, each year. The young, usually numbering from three to six, leave the den permanently when they are about six weeks old, and form a hunting group with their mother to learn the intricacies of survival. In the fall, the families separate and each member establishes his own home.

Four of these smallest of the true Carnivores arrived in Calgary at 5 P.M. on April 29th, 1969. They came from Lethbridge where their mother had been killed. Only one had his eyes already open. The others had them all fully opened by May 3rd. Their age on arrival is estimated at approximately 3 weeks, but since least weasel data is virtually non-existent, it is impossible to make cross-reference comparisons. Their teeth were tiny and needle-like. After one-and-a-half days on a diet of diluted canned milk, which they quickly learned to drink from a small-mammal bottle, they seemed to want something more substantial. As they ate the minced heart and liver of a mouse, their whole little bodies trembled with excitement. They continued to accept more of the mouse, and also to chew on the remainder of the mouse carcass. They were fed around the clock every three-and-a-half to four hours until May 6th; then the night feedings were gradually decreased. As they ate an increasing amount of meat, they readily weaned themselves from the bottle.

Around May 10th, it became very noticeable that their baby movements were giving way to true weasel characteristics. They began to play boisterously with one another, become very aware of their surroundings, to startle easily at sudden movements, and to act differently when strange hands picked them up.

Our babies were extremely hard to measure accurately, but a day after their arrival, they averaged approximately 95 mm\* in total length. The three males weighed 20 gm.\*\* each; the female weighed 18 gm. The Adult measurements given by Soper<sup>5</sup> are: total length between 180 mm. and 200 mm., weight between 45 gm. and 60 gm. Our young were therefore almost half of adult size before their eyes were completely open.



This phenomenon of size ratio has previously been brought to attention in other specimen caught with their young.

REFERENCES:

1. Soper, J.D.; "Notes on Canadian Weasels: Canadian Field Naturalist; vol. 33; 1919
2. Criddle, Norman and Stuart; Canadaian Field Naturalist; 1925; vol. 39
3. Seton; Life Histories of North American Animals; 1909
4. Ibid. no 2
5. Soper, J.D.; The Mammals of Alberta; 1964

\* 100 Millimeters 0.3937 inch

\*\* 1 gram 0.03527 ounce

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MAY 5-6, 1970

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☐ I will need: ☐ Projector ☐ Slide Projector  
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TOPEKA, KANSAS

MAY 5 - 6, 1970



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